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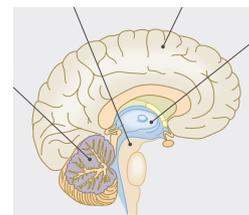
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Too much
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BMJ Masterclasses

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12 October 2013 Vol 347

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Published weekly. US periodicals class postage paid at Rahway, NJ. Postmaster: send address changes to *BMJ*, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001, USA. \$796. Weekly.

Printed by Polestar Limited



LUKE ARCHER/PHOTOGRAPHY

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Lister restaged: last Wednesday, 2 October, Joseph Lister's 1877 inaugural lecture at King's College London, recorded verbatim in shorthand for the *BMJ* (1877;2:465), was re-enacted in the Great Hall at King's, its original setting. Lister was played by Royal Shakespeare Company actor Sean O'Callaghan (pictured left). Lister, the father of aseptic surgery, published in the *BMJ* for more than 40 years and features in our "Surgery transformed" series (www.bmj.com/multimedia/video/2009/05/21/surgery-transformed).

● OBSERVATIONS, p 24

RESPONSE OF THE WEEK

"Granger's Personal view left me wondering why doctors are so poor at identifying themselves. Is there something in our culture which makes us ashamed to be identified personally? Is this a parallel to our tendency to hide behind the label of 'doctor'?"

Some doctors seem ashamed of the labels they actually do wear, placing them in positions which prevent their patients from reading them. Unlike the doctor in the cartoon, whose labels are at least in a readable position, many doctors seem to favour labels hovering over their groin. If they sit down beside the bed, they can't be seen. If I meet the doctors in the corridor I have to crouch to see their names. Doctors' identities are important: they are not a fig leaf."

Ted Leverton, retired GP, Bere Alston, UK, in response to "Healthcare staff must properly introduce themselves to patients" (*BMJ* 2013;347:f5833)

MOST READ

Comparative effectiveness of exercise and drug interventions on mortality outcomes: metaepidemiological study

Academic performance of ethnic minority candidates and discrimination in the MRCGP examinations between 2010 and 2012: analysis of data

Fruit consumption and risk of type 2 diabetes: results from three prospective longitudinal cohort studies

Personality disorder

Political drive to screen for pre-dementia: not evidence based and ignores the harms of diagnosis

BMJ.COM POLL

Last week's poll asked: "Should we bring in universal mental health checks in schools?"

53% voted yes
 (total 802 votes cast)

● *BMJ* 2012;347:f5478

This week's poll asks:

"Should e-cigarettes be regulated as medicines?"

● *BMJ* 2013;347:f5780

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

It's the ecology, stupid

Health workers in particular have concerns, knowledge, and skills that can be put to good use to mitigate climate change

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Climate change, say Anthony Costello and colleagues, is a bad dream that won't go away, a "superwicked" problem (p 7). "Wicked" is social planning speak for a complex problem with many causes and no straightforward solutions. We cannot assume that a future geek or Nobel prize winner will fix climate change, warn the authors: we all have to tackle this together. Health workers in particular have concerns, knowledge, and skills that can be put to good use to mitigate climate change, protect the most vulnerable populations, and act as advocates. We should be shouting from the rooftops that climate change is a health problem.

Meanwhile, millions of rooftops are being skimmed by planes. You might imagine that living right under a flight path could affect mental health, but could it have any impact on physical health? It's beginning to look that way, explains psychiatrist Stephen Stansfeld, in discussing two new studies that are ecological in both senses of the word (p 8). Anna Hansell and colleagues found significant excess risks of stroke, coronary heart disease, and cardiovascular disease, among 3.6 million people living near London Heathrow airport, most markedly among the 2% of the population exposed to the highest levels of aircraft noise (p 12). The authors rightly avoid any causal inferences, not least because they had no data on individual residents' risk factors. But their analyses were adjusted using area level data on age, sex, social deprivation, ethnic composition, lung cancer mortality (as a conservative proxy for smoking) and—for the areas within London—particulate air pollution and road noise.

Andrew W Correia and colleagues used different

methods and datasets, yet came to very similar conclusions about the risks of cardiovascular disease among more than six million older people exposed to aircraft noise near 89 US airports (p 11). Both papers come with video abstracts that really bring the studies to life. Head over to our multimedia channel for these and a growing collection of short films made by the authors of *BMJ* research papers (<http://bit.ly/1cGZQ8x>).

Last month's report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) pushed the science on climate change one step further from "the region of speculation and loose statement into the domain of precise and definite knowledge." That quote comes not from the IPCC's report, however: it's how Joseph Lister concluded his inaugural lecture as professor of surgery at King's College London on 1 October 1877. The only full record of Lister's talk was captured verbatim in shorthand by a correspondent from the *BMJ* (1877;2:465). Now medical student Ben Chisnall has written up the lecture's re-enactment that took place at King's College last week (p 24). Rather than talking directly about aseptic surgical technique, Lister got his audience's attention by demonstrating his proof that putrefaction and fermentation are caused by micro-organisms. Then, as now, the science of interactions between organisms and their environments (which is, of course, the definition of ecology) mattered to medics, even the sceptics.

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Cite this as: *BMJ* 2013;347:f6095

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Polls

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